

Civil Air Patrol Oral History Interview

WNER.14-1
Mr. Donald N. Hancock
7 June 2014



NATIONAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Headquarters CAP

CIVIL AIR PATROL
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interview

of

Mr. Donald N. Hancock

by

2d Lt Joshua B. Bell, CAP

Date: 7 June 2014

Location: Norway, Maine

FOREWORD

The following is the transcript of an oral history interview recorded digitally. Since only minor emendations have been made, the reader should bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. Additionally, no attempt to confirm the historical accuracy of the statements has been made. As a result, the transcript reflects the interviewee's personal recollections of a situation as he remembered it at the time of the interview.

Editorial notes and additions made by CAP historians are enclosed in brackets. If feasible, first names, ranks, or titles are also provided. Any additions, deletions and changes subsequently made to the transcript by the interviewee are not indicated. Researchers may wish to listen to the actual interview recording prior to citing the transcript.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

In this oral history interview, Mr. Donald N. Hancock recalls his time as a Civil Air Patrol Cadet in the Lewiston-Auburn Squadron 112 during the Second World War. Of particular interest are his recollection of his first flight, and what it was like traveling across the country in the service.

The interview begins with his experiences as a young person and working for the owner of the local airport before he was drafted into military service and deployed to the Pacific Theater of Operations. This interview also includes a discussion of several period photos and documents, which are included in the appendix.

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CAP ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Number: WNER.14-1
Digitally Recorded Interview With: Mr. Donald Norman Hancock
Location of Interviewee: Norway, Maine
Conducted by: 2d Lt Joshua B. Bell, CAP

B: Today is June 7, 2014. I am second Lieutenant Joshua Bell of Civil Air Patrol. Lieutenant Colonel Frank Poacher, Minute Man squadron out of Marlboro, Massachusetts. Could I have you say your name for the record, sir?

H: Donald Norman Hancock.

B: When and where were you born?

H: In Lewiston Maine. August 14, 1926.

B: What were your parents' names?

H: Father Chelsea W. Hancock. Mother was Emily Sophie Vermette.

B: How do you spell that?

H: VERMETTE.

B: What did they do?

H: My father was a railroad laborer and my mother was a homemaker.

B: What railroad did you dad work on?

H: Maine Central.

B: Did you have any siblings?

H: No.

B: What was it like growing up in the 1930's?

H: Well of course being a youngster at the time it was a learning experience that's all for how things went. You accepted daily life as it came. No anxieties about it, we just roll with the punches.

B: The Depression didn't affect you?

H: Oh sure, we had the unemployment in the region like everybody had, and you just get by with less. You didn't have luxurious things. I don't know what else to say there.

We had a very industrial area in Lewiston in Auburn, with textiles and shoe manufacturing. Then of course in the mid-thirties there somewhere there was a very serious strike in the shoe industry and that put people in bread lines and really made it difficult for a time. But they got over it, they got over it.

B: Do you have any history of military or national service in your family?

H: My father was in World War I, but he never went overseas. It ended not too long after he entered because of the timing. But yes he was in World War I.¹

B: What unit was he with?

H: Oh I don't know I might be able to look it up. I've got his discharge papers but not at my fingertips.

B: No worries, no worries. How connected were you with the global situation in Europe when war broke out?

H: When the war broke out I was a school boy of course then in high school. I didn't have much connection with that other than as the draft called up the young men around the country it made a lot of job openings. I had a few small jobs at a young age. It gave me some varied experiences

¹ His Father was in the 151st Depot Brigade, U.S. Army

over a short period of time. You might have called me a job hopper then because the next place looked pretty good all the time.

When the war started in '41 or something I was quite young. But in '44 I went to welding school and became a welder at the Bath Ironworks where they built Navy ships. Then from that I got interested and I changed from that and went to work for Roland Maheux that you've seen on some of the paper there. He owned a small airport and I went to work for him.

B: I forgot to ask what high school did you go to?

H: Town of Mechanic Falls. It was simply that Mechanic Falls High School.

B: How far away from Lewiston-Auburn is that?

H: Ten miles.

B: You said you went to work at the airport. What did you do?

H: I was just a pair of hands. I'd fuel up the planes and move them about, and do maintenance at the airport there. I'm thinking now; mowing and repairing holes and so forth.

I don't know if I'm getting a head of my story, when I went to work for this man he needed some help because he'd lost two employees to the war effort. So he had an extra business which was pinball machines and jukeboxes, because he lost his servicemen for that. Anyway he trained me to work on that so he could do his other aviation business.

When I first went to work for him he had a small strip near the municipal airport in Lewiston-Auburn. The military took that over for training, and I think they trained British pilots there, but I'm not sure. Anyway they built a fence around and had an entrance gate with Marines guarding it. Anyway the local fling had to be moved out, so this Mr. Maheux bought a piece of land out of town a little bit because there was a no fly zone now with that military involvement. So he moved and found this place outside of the no fly zone. And we ended up there with 1800' grass strip, and we were at 720' elevation. It made a good place for all the private plane owners to have a base.

Anyway that developed into the local Squadron 112 of the Civil Air Patrol. This Roland Maheux became the captain of Squadron 112. In that packet I gave you there's a little card showing him outside the plane spinning the prop, did you catch that?

B: Yes, I did.

H: Okay, that was before this time period, a little bit before the Civil Air Patrol was formed. That's autographed by the way so that's a treasure for you.

He did that, he was a stunt one of them kinds who did some shows and so forth. Anyway he taught me to fly in the beginning and then later he had other instructors that finished the job. In fact you've got a newspaper clipping of him showing me a little bit about the cockpit in one of them things. You've got that too.

B: Oh, yes I did.

H: That was my first log time back in 1943.

B: How did you learn about the Civil Air Patrol?

H: By being there at this airport working for him, as I say kind of developed. I don't know a thing about how long it was in existence at all, or where that was the beginning. I don't know anything prior of 1943.

B: What did your parents think about the Civil Air Patrol and you joining that organization?

H: My father was deceased, and my mother was all for it. I mean, goodness her boy should go out in aviation. It was no objections at all.

B: Was there concern that you would be drafted?

H: Not really, not really. I guess it was just accepted that, yes, it was going to happen, but that was all. Others around us were drafted and gone, and maybe next inline. And that did happen.

B: Eventually.

H: Yes.

B: When did you join the Civil Air Patrol?

H: In 1943.

B: What did you understand the organization to be, what did they tell you about it when you joined up?

H: It was just learning experience. As a young fellow you was interested and excited about aviation, and look forward to participation. But I didn't know what lies ahead at all.

B: How close was the squadron to your home?

H: Quite close because at this time I was living with Mr. Maheux, and probably seven or eight miles, eight or nine miles from where we lived at the time.

B: But with Mr. Maheux it was a little bit closer?

H: No, no I lived with him. I didn't have a home for a time period. And working for him as I did I live with him.

B: Did any of your friends join Civil Air Patrol with you?

H: No.

B: Did they know about it?

H: Frankly I didn't circulate much with peers. I was busy working there and I liked what I was doing and with the service work that went with those pinball machines and all it was much of the time in the evenings. I didn't have any social life then, I wasn't interested. I wanted to learn something. So I worked all I could and learned all I could about what I was doing.

B: What was your schedule like?

H: After breakfast off you went. I had a list of places to go around servicing the pinball machines. Then I'd be at the airport the rest of the time. And as I said earlier it was just a matter of fueling up the planes, and moving them around to having them get parked in a safe area and that sort of thing.

I didn't have any title at that age, you've got to think about that. I was still a kid.

B: How many planes were there?

H: I'm going to say twenty-five.

B: How many were Civil Air Patrol planes?

H: Well I really can't answer that, I just all assumed they were a part of it. We had a lot of plane owners in our squadron. You've got a couple pictures there of our group, one of them shows us in a parade, and another one shows us in a drill formation where we did some military drill to keep busy.²

I'm looking at here, let's see, one, two, three, four, five, I'm looking at about twenty-eight people in this picture that were in our squadron.

B: Where are you in the picture?

H: You don't have that?

B: I do have that picture, where are you in the picture?

H: Let me look, as you look on the left I'm the second person, I'm the good-looking one, I'm the second person in that line. In fact I'm the first one in that line that's got a uniform jacket and all.

B: Okay I see that. Behind the guy with the leather jacket?

H: Yes.

B: And in front of the guy with the glasses?

H: Yes. The leather jacket fellow was an owner. The one to his left was an owner, and the next one to his left an owner. Right across the page until you got to the ladies. The front man there is Captain Maheux.

B: What kind of a guy was he?

² According to a later note from Mr. Hancock, there were no official CAP planes there.

H: He was an ambitious person. He was all the time trying to make sales, he was sales motivated. He started a lot of small businesses some of which turned out to be quite big as our area goes. Not on the national scale but locally he had some businesses. He started a Volkswagen business, then he started a TV business. I'm trying to think a little later in life the RV activity showed up, motorhomes and all. He had a big business in motorhomes.

Back at the time we're talking about here he had dealership for the Piper Cubs, and Luscombe, and the SeaBees. He's an ambitious person.

B: How was he as a squadron commander?

H: Very good, very good. He was on the ball and tried to keep it in a military atmosphere.

B: How did everybody else react to that?

H: Very good, they supported him.

B: What was it like having women in the squadron?

H: Of course there's only two or three maybe, and they had clerical positions. That made it okay.

B: Everybody volunteered right?

H: Yes, sir. There's one in this group here that became a commercial pilot what was then called North East Airlines with DC-3s.

B: How about that.

H: We felt good about that because we all took lessons together for a while.

B: What did you do for training for Civil Air Patrol?

H: This formation we're just discussing was at the Armory at Lewiston, Maine where we had some classroom space, and the drill area to make us look good in a parade and so forth. But they taught us a little bit about meteorology and simple things.

It wasn't like being in a school it was just a group of people keeping informed.

B: You also learned about flying right?

H: Yes, yes, I got my first log time there with the group.

B: Can you tell me about your first time in a plane?

H: This was Mr. Maheux, my first ride that was something. It was side-by-side this one. So I get in the air and I expected like everybody else we'd taxi out from the apron and get out on the runway and head out. Well that didn't happen. We were on the apron and he revved up, he went across the runway and off into space. As soon as he got airborne he did a wing over. Of course that scared me at the time, I'd never done that of course, as I say first time see.

That was for his pleasure, he get a kick out of that, he enjoyed that. Then right after that I began to get some lessons from him.

B: That was part of the training through CAP?

H: No, that was a fun trip for him. It was for his pleasure. He was playing with me.

B: You must have had your first solo?

H: Oh yeah, I got a private after a while and [later got my] seaplane rating. Solo, I can speak for myself about that that you take off, landed many times and they felt you were competent so he let you go solo all the way.

Taking off was fun, now you get up there, run around a just little bit and come back down. Then you're alone now, wow you're alone. Anyway after that first touch down you're all set.

B: Were you nervous?

H: Apprehensive. I don't know about being nervous, I can't remember that. I don't think I was, I was confident. I was alright. Some that went solo out there - out of the group - they'd bounce a little and overshoot. Anyway I did not do that I had confidence and I did a good job, I got to say that.

B: What other stories do you have from your time with Civil Air Patrol?

H: Being where we were we in land quite a bit compared to some squadrons that got into submarine search duty and all. We didn't do that because our little fuel tanks wouldn't let us go out there and get much done. But we were available for search and rescue, and we worked with other Civil Defense organizations for training. There again you've got a clip in there of one of our times where we made a mock of an airplane crash and call the Civil Defense to come help us out, rescue.

Things like that, we kept prepared to the unknown on the local level. We just couldn't go over the ocean from there.

B: Was there a sense that you were sort of preparing yourselves also to go to war?

H: No, no, not that. All civilian interests, we weren't being prepared for wartime, further military involvement. We're just natives, home grown.

B: Did you hold any ranks while you were in Civil Air Patrol?

H: No.

B: Just cadet?

H: Yes.

B: Plain old cadet, okay.

H: Make one remark. You find that picture that shows us in the parade. You got it?

B: Yes, go ahead.

H: The one that's carrying the signboard that says Civil Air Patrol and so forth in the front, that's me.

B: Oh where are you going? That's good to know. How did the city respond to your presence, the Civil Air Patrol?

H: Say that again.

B: How did the Lewiston-Auburn respond to having Civil Air Patrol around?

H: They were proud and thankful, and gave us support on a postal level, they didn't make any donations or do anything. So a way of a celebration for us, they welcomed us we were a bunch of people lending ourselves to the war effort at the time, at the local level.

B: I see among the certificates you have a model aircraft certificate from the Navy.

H: I got one for the Navy some where's right, is that what it says on it?

B: Yes. Could you tell me a bit about what you did to get that?

H: Okay. I was in school, because you notice the date on that. I was in school I think I was in the eighth grade. For a shop project which we didn't have much of a shop, we were in the boiler room or basement of this school building. Anyway our instructor was very determined to teach us to do something woodworking and all that.

This come down the chute somehow, I made a model as it says on that to that specification and so forth. My model was of a Jap Zero fighter and off it went. It was a plain model and it [was] just plain black for a silhouette. They used it classroom training. They'd dangle it on the string for pilots to learn to recognize that model and so forth.

B: Oh very neat, very neat. Also among your certificates in a National Rifle Association of America certificate.

H: Okay, that comes from being an employee at the airport and at this time it was a concern every nook and cranny nationwide about sabotage. So even locally they had military guards on railroad bridges locally. They had a detachment in this town I was in of Mechanic Falls they had detachment station right there and they would cover several bridges in anticipation, just protecting it.

Back to the certificate National Rifle Association. Being at the airport I was designated as a guard. Not a sentry type guard, but you watch everything. It was concerned that maybe saboteurs might come and try to steal off with an airplane and go do something destructive. Anyway that's what that was for.

Boy I'm telling you when I started that, you talk about not being able to hit the side of a barn, and I couldn't. But I got corrected and did a good job, got that done.

B: What was that training like? Was it a one day training?

H: Oh no that went over several weeks, one evening at a time for several sessions.

B: Were there a lot of people in that group?

H: No, just a few employees.

B: What was life like on the home front?

H: Gee, I don't know what to say about that. We got up had breakfast, went out and went to work and that's all. Because there was no gasoline to run around with you got a ration of that to do what you had to do. But boy you didn't have any extra. Tires as well, you had to get the certificate to get another tire if you needed one.

It was different a lot much with your gasoline per week. A private family could get five gallons a week. Then if you were doing something for the war effort in the light of defense work you of course got more. It went up from 5, to 10, to 15. I think I've got a call but I'm not going to do it.

Anyway rationing was quite something. Food was rationed some, and butter, sugar, meat, a lot of things like that.

B: How did you see Civil Air Patrol as fitting in with the war effort?

H: Well we were just available to assist if anything come up. Supposed there was a trainee from a base somewhere that got lost didn't get back, we were available to go out and search, such things as that.

B: Were there any people who were stationed permanently... who were on the airport on a permanent basis as part of Civil Air Patrol?

H: The owner live there and some other employees. Between everybody they'd be somebody there around the clock. This was a small field you know we talked about twenty-five aircraft and 1,800' grass strip. So it wasn't a very big operation.

B: Do you know if any of the senior officers got a stipend for their meals or anything?

H: I don't follow that, say it again.

B: Do you know if any of the officers get a stipend for their meals?

H: No, no, no. It was all volunteer, you was on your own.

B: Very good. What are you most proud of about your service in Civil Air Patrol?

H: Just the fact that being a young fellow and pitching in at that time. I couldn't do much in the way in defense work out there, I'm not old enough to be employee some places. Anyway, I was pitching in with what I could do as a civilian.

B: Then Uncle Sam found you.

H: Yeah, yeah December of '44 he found me.

B: How did your mom respond to that?

H: That's just the way things were. It was my turn and off I went. That's different than volunteering it's been a long time since anybody was drafted. So in these last several wars they've been all volunteers you know.

Now that could make a difference in how things were death with back home. But when you're drafted it's just one way to go and that's with them.

B: What unit were you assigned to?

H: Infantry.

B: What division?

H: It was the Seventh Infantry.

B: Do you remember where you did your basic training?

H: Fort McClellan, Alabama.

B: Fort McClellan, Alabama. So different piece of real estate than Maine?

H: Yes but didn't see much of it other than the training grounds where you'd go out on hikes and play soldier out there in the woods and things like that. Lots of military drilling, although it was war time and they weren't as extensive as if they might have been in peacetime, because we had a reason to be there and to be trained.

So they of course put a lot of effort on training you to be in the field.

B: Do you think that having the military bearing from Civil Air Patrol helped you out at basic training?

H: A little. By then I'd learn about how to drill, and how to sit still while the officer would be talking to you. It helped in that respect.

B: Had you been away from home before?

H: No.

B: So this is a big trip?

H: Yeah, in effect I didn't have a home, my father was deceased and my mother was living by herself, and I was living with Maheux. Anyway it weren't like even a real home.

B: Were you excited about going to training?

H: No. I didn't fight it or object, that's the way things are, so off I go.

B: Did you have a preference as to which field of operations you wanted to be in?

H: No you didn't have any choice there. But you had a little preference about the type of service you might do, which in my case, I was interested in what they called, at that time, an artillery observer. Which meant you'd fly a small plane and go hedgehopping around looking for the artillery locations. But when I went in the service they didn't need any more of that, so they moved me to another type of training which was infantry.

B: What was the train ride like across the country?

H: Okay, at that time they weren't flying people around, they used surface transportation. The first basic training there in Alabama was targeted toward the European theater. By the time we got done training, basic training I'd been moved to Newportnews, Virginia to wait with others for a boat to go to Europe. While we were there Germany surrendered, defeated. It stopped anyway, so they shifted us to focus on the Pacific.

From there we went to camp, to camp, to so forth. Finally shipped out of Seattle after having additional training suited to the Pacific Theatre type of warfare. Anyway off we went and after quite a few stops along the way I went to Hawaii for a couple of weeks for some beachhead landing, and then we get on another boat and we went out a little ways to the Marshall Islands and gathered up some more boats, then the Caroline Islands.

We stayed on the boats all this time except a day trip to go ashore. It was like a vacation because we were still waiting for the convoy to assemble. Now after the Caroline Islands we had enough and off we went. Not knowing where we're going but we're still not assigned to an outfit, we're just replacements. And I call ourselves throw away people. We're replacing people that had even fallen ill or had enough service time to come back home.

While heading out that way we now encounter more Japanese submarine concern, then a little further on we get nearer the action which was Iwo Jima, and then Okinawa, and we begin to get aircraft coming on us, but they took care of them. Anyhow, I get off the boat on Okinawa and now we get assigned to an outfit. In a matter of a few days I got moved to where I was going to be a truck driver. Well that suited me fine because now I don't have to walk.

Then I drove on that end of Okinawa while we were there and pretty soon Japan surrendered. Right away they get move over into Korea, went into Korea one of the first couple of days. I was

there quite a while and drove all over South Korea and little bit over 38th³ at one time. Anyhow I enjoyed what I was doing as long as I had to be there, but when it comes time to come home I was ready, I come home. Come home up around Japan, up around the Aleutians and to Seattle.

B: Oh wow, my grandfather was in the Aleutians.

H: Really.

B: During World War II.

H: We didn't get off the boat except go by there, from where we were they call that the northern loop to get back to the States.

You mentioned the ride on the train, now that's another thing - all Pullmans. I enjoyed the upper bunks. There was the clickaty clacking and the swaying. I went through thirty-eight states on the train.

B: What was it like to see so much country?

H: I enjoyed it. I didn't know where I was a lot of the time, but there was time from the scenery was great. There were other times we were just in a big railroad yard for a day or two for whatever reason, but we stayed on the train and off we'd go again.

B: How did you pass the time on the train?

H: Say that again.

B: How did you pass the time?

H: Weren't anything to do, you just sit there and look out the window. There's nothing to do. If you had something to read you could. I wasn't a reader, I didn't do that.

I did enjoy looking out the window that was about it.

B: What was life like on those ships as you cross the pacific?

³ Referring to the 38th Parallel.

H: For me it was like I was heading into a black hole. I had no thoughts about coming back. I wasn't afraid other than here I go, that's it.

I was concerned that if the boat got hit and sank I didn't like the idea the of having to get out and walk out there.

B: That's for sure, that's for sure.

H: Yeah.

B: You stopped in Hawaii for a little while.

H: Yeah, yeah, we got beach head landing training there. We got out on these landing craft boats. They get you almost to shore and let the ramp down and send you out. You had to wade to shore and make like you was getting shot at and making a landing.

B: Did you have any free time on Hawaii?

H: A little bit. One thing I remembered, most of it was in a military vessel. They took us up to the Dole farmland where we could see pineapples growing, and then have pineapple everything, cake, pies, all kinds of stuff. We had that in the mess hall.

As for downtime to go downtown, there was none of that.

B: Just organized trips?

H: Yes.

B: When did you find out where you were going from Hawaii?

H: When we landed on Okinawa.

B: How far removed were you from the initial landings on Okinawa?

H: That I don't know, because I don't know where the initial landing was, I have no idea.

B: Do you know how long it was between the first landing and when you showed up?

H: No I don't, no. There's a time period out there we didn't know what was really going on as the war proceeded from this island area to that one, the next and so forth. We didn't know where we were or what was happening.

B: Just rolling with the punches?

H: Yes.

B: What are you most proud of about your time in the service?

H: I can't tell other than a few experiences out there, meeting Japanese face-to-face for the first time. Some could speak English and we learned a little from that. I got nothing directly to say that I'm proud of, it was just all in the day's work. I didn't do anything heroic. Again, it was just like all in a day's work, I could have been anywhere to do that sort of thing.

B: What was it like meeting the Japanese face-to-face in a peaceful setting?

H: Okay the first of it you're a little apprehensive. In fact after I'm in Korea, I was assigned to go with a small group to check on all Jap encampments in an area. One of these was we're supposed to look at all the buildings and equipment, and rolling stock to see what it would take to relocate them get them back and send them back home.

Anyway one of these places there was a munitions build, and there was a Japanese guard in front of it. Me and another guy walked over to go look into the building like we're supposed to do. But he come to armed guard, and we stopped right there, he was doing his job. Anyhow we called for some help and officers came and get him to ease off, but we did our job. But you don't know what they're thinking, that time it's all brand new to them, some of them. It was interesting.

In fact the first day in Korea my truck stayed on the boat along with some others and we rode on Japanese trucks from Incheon to Seoul with a few supplies on the truck to get us in there. Next day we went back and get our own trucks off the boat. I never understood why that happened. But in these Jap trucks that were to meet us, the one we had was just two of us on that truck. There was a Jap officer, a driver and a soldier. Because we rode up on the back on the load and off we went. But there was a little apprehension about that traveling off into the unknown as their host almost. But anyway nothing happened.

B: What do you remember about the day the war ended in Europe?

H: Not much other than we were just a whole bunch of like chickens in a chicken coop waiting for that next boat to take us to Europe. When the war was over they just said, now you guys are going to go somewhere else. That's all, there was no hoopla or anything where I was.

B: How about when Japan surrendered?

H: Now that was different. Boy I was on Okinawa and all the shore batteries, anti-aircraft stuff, them guys just all said whoopee and gave their gun turrets to us to spin and let them fire all over the place. You was in danger then while they were doing that. Then they stopped the celebrating, but that was a big deal.

B: Then you were immediately shipped to Korea?

H: Yes.

B: What did you think about that?

H: Again it was just like all in a day's work. The only thing was we knew not to expect to get shot at or anything like that because it was supposed to be over. Well did they really know that, you know you wondered all the time. Things were okay, they didn't do anything that they shouldn't.

As I mentioned a few minutes ago about this guy that came to on guard and like that, he was just doing his job. I don't know how far he was going, if we hadn't stopped right there, but we had a lot of help then, no concern. But for the most part they were glad to have us there so they could go home.

These people in Korea at that time, as I understand it, had been fighting in Manchuria or something. They were at war with China for a while which I didn't know about. But anyhow they weren't fighting that like they were on Okinawa.

B: I forgot to ask, what was your rank, what did you start as?

H: Say that again.

B: What rank did you start with?

H: I ended up being what they call a T5 that was Corporal with a Corporal's pay scale, but no authority.

B: Well there you go. I want to check my list real quick and make sure that I got all my questions in. Is there anything that I didn't ask you about but you want to tell me?

H: Yeah, well okay, after I get back home, back to work at the airport where I was earlier. I continued flying lessons get my private license with a seaplane rating. Then went on into civilian life.

B: Excellent, did you have any contact with Civil Air Patrol after the war?

H: No, no. It was almost like it was disbanded. I don't know about that at all, but I had no contact with them until a couple years ago when they called me a presentation.

B: Who delivered that presentation?

H: The Maine wing, it was the entire Maine Wing.

B: You got a promotion out of it didn't you?

H: On paper they gave me like temporary Colonel or something like that. That's what they call that. Then I got a medal for distinguished service.

B: Excellent, excellent, and that's one of the pictures here?

H: Yes it is, yes.

B: What did you think -

H: And by the way you got that picture, you're looking at it?

B: Yes.

H: That lapel button I'm wearing is the same one that I wore in that parade in 1943. I can't find it myself now.

B: It's your hood ornament.

H: What?

B: It's your hood ornament.

H: Yeah I guess so, yeah.

B: I see, that's nice.

H: In that bunch of stuff you've got a few small pieces there which is like pilots registration number. My original Civil Air Patrol membership card, if you take that out.

B: Oh yeah it's right here.

H: On the backside is my picture.

B: Oh I hadn't noticed that, how about that.

H: Yeah, okay, just make sure you knew about that.

B: I forgot to ask when you did fly around with Civil Air Patrol did you ever fly over Portland?

H: No stayed inland all the time ... One more thing there's one picture here which is a page off a magazine, it's yellow you got that one?

B: Yeah.

H: A lot of print with a picture of me in the corner, you got that?

B: Yeah.

H: Okay, if you didn't read that yet you might enjoy some of it, because it almost like our interview today here.

B: It was.

H: But in it there's one thing that we did, Captain Maheux and myself one day working with the Civil Defense on the ground. We went in and we bombed Lewiston-Auburn with little flour bags, different colors. And that was for them to respond to a different type of bomb stick. So that's in that item if you didn't read it yet.

B: Oh yes, yes, I forget to ask you about that, what was that like?

H: Oh that was a big deal, I mean being able to fly right down rooftop level, and say oh let's do the Bates Mill, let's do the Armory, let's do the City Hall. I was a bombardier. We had a lot of fun doing that.

Anyhow it was one of the few things that we could do that was more meaningful because we gave Civil Defense people on the ground an exercise something almost realistic.

B: How accurate were you as a bombardier?

H: I have no idea, you don't look back. I never heard anymore.

B: Excellent, well it's been a pleasure talking to you, sir.

H: Okay, my pleasure.

[End of recorded material 00:51:58]

Appendix I: Scans of Articles, Documents, and Photos

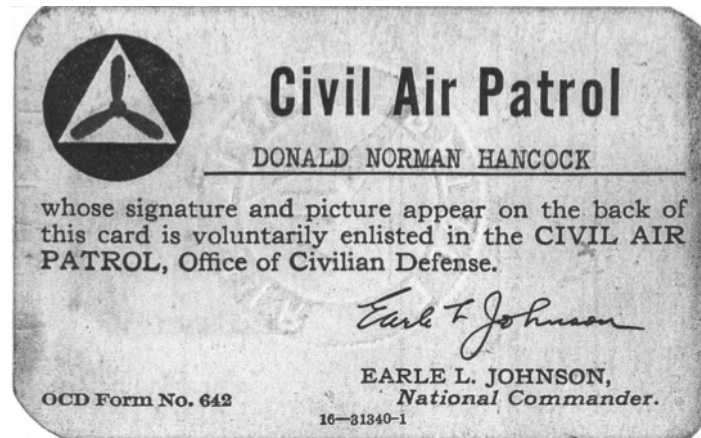


Figure 1. Front of Donald Hancock's WWII era CAP card

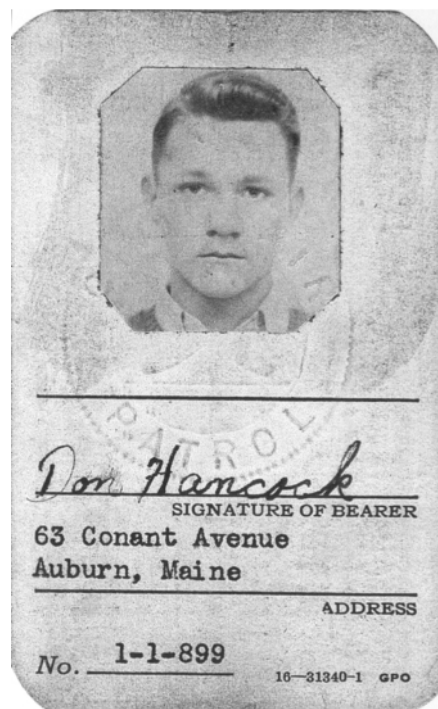


Figure 2. Back of Donald Hancock's WWII era CAP card



Figure 3. Scale Model Aircraft certificate issued to Donald Hancock by the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics

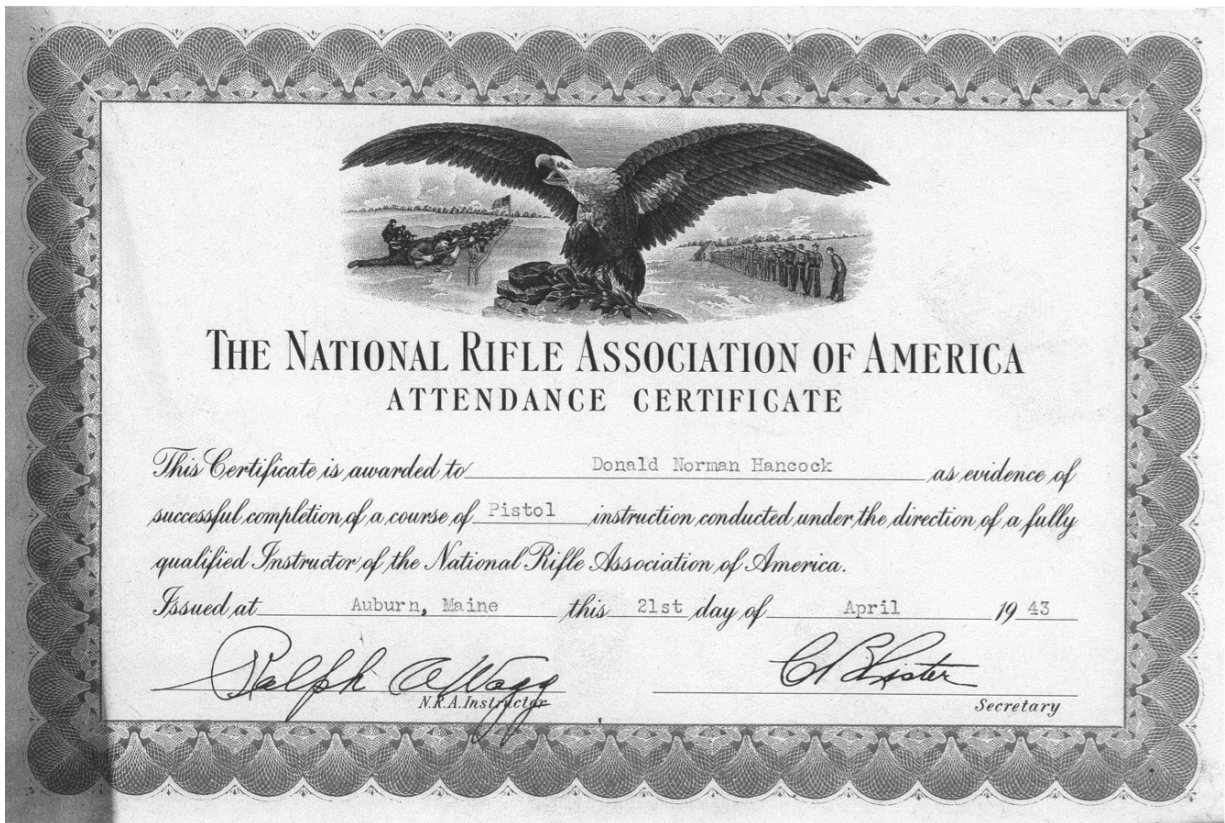


Figure 4. Donald Hancock's NRA certificate which he earned to help provide security at the airport.



Figure 5. CAP Squadron 112 based in Lewiston-Auburn, Maine. Donald Hancock is in the second person in the first column, behind the officer with the leather flight jacket

Thrills Aplenty When CAP Puts On First Aid Demonstrations

BY SAM E. CONNER

A blue Taylor craft plane was circling in the sky over Minot Sunday afternoon. It meant nothing to automobilists and residents who saw it, but suddenly the radio receiving set in the car of Lt. Ellis Stevens of the CAP began talking.

"A plane has crashed," came the voice of Capt. Roland Maheux out of the ether.

"I'll give you location in a moment," he added.

This was at 2:46 o'clock, at 2:47 his voice again came in over the receiver: "It is in a field off the highway, about half a mile beyond the airport and nearly as far down in the field, next the woods; take the first road opening beyond the port."

Lt. Stevens had already called on the first aid members of the Maheux squadron of CAP, and as he repeated this message, Henry Conant, with four others went into action.

With four companions he dashed to his car, stepped on the starter and roared away up the road.

At 2:49, just two minutes later, his car was stopped within 50 feet of the wrecked plane and the first aiders were rushing to the victims stretched upon the ground.

The distance from the starting point was two miles.

First Aid Demonstration

Calm yourself. Hold the excitement. It was all make believe. Part of a first aid demonstration by the students at the Maheux port who

are members of the CAP, but it was staged with a realism which provided plenty of thrills.

While all the participants knew they were to take part in a demonstration they hadn't the slightest idea of where the supposed crash was to take place, what the nature of the injuries they would be called upon to handle were, or when the call was to come. That was as close to the real thing as it was possible to make it.

Lt. Stevens was cruising in his car waiting the call, which Capt. Maheux was to give from the air.

Bad Spots No Bar

When Conant raced up the road he hadn't the slightest idea what sort of road conditions he must meet. He slowed for the turn—says so himself—though occupants of trailing cars had their own ideas, dashed across the first field. A rock fence loomed ahead. There was an opening in it and what seemed to be a trail through it. Still speeding, though as he approached a mass of mud and huge rocks loomed in front.

As it was a test a slow down, even a stop and walk the rest of the way would have been justifiable, but the young man acted just as though it were the real thing.

He went through on high and held it until at the scene of the crash. It was real. It was exciting and more realism was added at the scene by the presence of a plane its nose in the ground and tail nearly straight up in the air, while three victims were stretched on the ground beside it.

That part of the stage setting had been fixed up by Capt. Maheux unbeknown to the others and it made a spectator take a second look and do some thinking.

Each of the victims had a slip of paper telling the first aiders what his supposed injuries were and they went to work at once.

Gordon Libby was supposed to have a serious cut and a crushed hand. Richard Bubier's injuries were supposed to be a compound fracture of the right leg, while Donald Hawkins was supposed to be suffering from a broken right forearm and bad cut on the head.

Worked Efficiently and Speedily. Dr. Weeks of Buckfield, who had planned the demonstration and arranged the problems was on hand to watch the work and passed judgment on results.

Leon S. Ladd, first aid instructor, who has taught these students was also present to observe how well they had grasped the lessons given them. Both he and the Doctor expressed great satisfaction with the demonstration.

The various injuries were given first aid treatment and in the case of Bubier and Libby it was necessary to improvise stretchers to move them to the ambulance, which in this case was the airport's pick-up truck, also to take them from it at the hospital, which was the port itself.

Young Libby added a lot of realism by doing some first class groaning, pleading with them not to leave him there to die alone in the field and then, suddenly exclaiming:

"Gee, move me over there, where that cute little number of a nurse is."

He had looked and seen Miss Julia Poulin, a first aid student, helping with the work on Bubier.

Figure 6.1. An article about CAP activities of Squadron 112 during the Second World War



PRACTICE CRASH at the Maheux airport, yesterday. At top, crashed plane, with victims on the ground. Lower photo, working on Richard Bubier for a compound fracture of the leg, Miss Julian Poulin, Ellsworth on the ground. Lower photo, working on Henry Conant.

Figure 6.2. Continuation of the article



Figure 7. Photo of a parade in Lewiston. CAP Squadron 112 marched. Donald Hancock is on the right holding the sign.

LEWISTON JOURNAL

MAGAZINE SECTION

LEWISTON, MAINE, Saturday, August 21, 1943

12 Pages

Civil Air Patrol Receives Training At Maheux's Airport In Minot

BY SAM E. CONNER

Out in Minot at Maheux's airport nearly half a hundred young men are training for service in the CAP, which, if you don't know, means Civil Air Patrol, which is as definite a part of the American war prosecution program, as the R. A. F. is to that of England.

Yes, this CAP is playing a very important role, even though it isn't a fighting organization in the general accepted meaning of that term, in the war.

Some of its units are mixed up in actual battles, others are and have been active in reducing the menace of the subs along the Atlantic, just as other units are acting as the eyes of the artillery in the fighting zones, where unarmed, in unarmed planes—little cubs and the like—you'd never think should be anywhere near a battle area, they go up and look the situation over.

From up there in the air, they radio back information which enables the gunners of the big cannon to know exactly where to point the guns in order to do the most damage.

And these boys of CAP don't go up so terribly high when on such missions. There have been instances where they've gone down to the tree tops and, even, flown between the trees in order to learn exactly what was wanted.

A Volunteer Outfit.

watched the sea beneath he noticed two little land planes, apparently sitting on the waves. Immediately he ordered his pilot to go down and investigate and found the planes weren't actually on the water, but that they were down within 150 feet of the waves seeking submarines.

"How far is it to land?" he asked his pilot.

"Seventy-one miles, the shortest way," was the reply.

Back at Mitchell field General Chaney wrote a letter to Major Earle L. Johnson, national commander of CAP, saying:

"I just wanted you to know that you have no draft dodgers in that bunch."

Training for Service

There you have an idea of what the CAP is along that line, there are other lines of service which they are doing a swell job at, but let's go back to Maheux Flying Field in Minot and the job Capt. Roland Maheux is doing training his squadron for duty.

"How long after a candidate has been accepted before you take him into the air?" I asked Capt. Maheux.

"Ten or 15 minutes," was the instant reply.

"Oh, I mean to take him up and fly the plane," was my explanation.

"And I said ten or 15 minutes," said he with a grin.

Probably this old mug had an expression of doubt, for he went on



him get used to the work and then I signal him to take over."

It sounded pretty simple, as he told it, but don't kid yourself, Capt. Maheux's hands are always on the controls and he's watching intently, ready to take over in an instant if necessary.

Hit the Horizon

The first order is for the candidate to head for the horizon; that is, to steer for it. He is learning to keep the ship level and hold to a straight course. As he gains confidence, shows that he is getting control of himself and understanding the way it is done, he is given some work in easy right and left turns, possibly in climbing and going down. Much will depend upon the aptitude which he shows.

That first lesson may be 15 minutes or half an hour, depending greatly on the way the candidate shows up.

Maheux takes over for the landing, because there is a lot more training required before the beginner will be permitted to do anything of that sort. As he gains proficiency his periods of flying the plane are increased and then he is instructed in making landings. Time after time he brings the plane down to a short distance off the ground before he is signaled to level off and climb again.

Many, many times he does this and then there comes the big when Roland lets him make a "dog" ing. Any mistakes he makes

Figure 7.1. An article about CAP Squadron 112. Donald Hancock is the cadet in the photo.

outfit. Not a member of it is an enlisted or drafted man. He's in there because he wants to be. His membership brings him no draft exemptions. He's in class A or B or whatever he has been just the same after he goes in, as he was before, which proves there was no poetry in the crypt remark of Major General James E. Chaney, commander of the First Air force at Mitchell Field, New York, when in speaking of the CAP, he said:

"You have no draft dodgers in that bunch."

The story of that remark is illuminating as to the job this organization is doing.

The General was flying in a twin motored bomber at 10,000 feet and was out over the ocean. As he

most fly themselves." "That's right," chipped in Ladd, who'd just been up with Roland. "I'd only flown once before and never had any instruction yet I've been flying that Cub up there this afternoon."

Not So Simple As It Sounds

Capt. Maheux then went on to explain that it probably wasn't as simple as it sounded, but that there was no need for wasting time with a lot of pre-flying instruction on the ground. He'd take a candidate out to the plane, seat him in it and then explain the various controls of the plane, how this one moved the rudder, this controlled something else, this was the throttle and so on and so forth, which meant the way you

CAPT. ROLAND MAHEUX, right, explains plane controls to Donald N. Hancock, Mechanic Falls, prior to making a flight.

moved this one to make a right or left turn.

The ones which controlled the up and down direction of the plane, as well as the signals employed in directing the beginner in handling the plane. Fifteen minutes of this, he assured, was all that was necessary, because the candidate could grasp it all. After that they were ready to fly.

"Do you let him take off," was the next question.

"Hardly," chuckled Roland.

"That'll come later. The plane is dual control. He sits in the pilot seat and I am beside him. His hands are on the control and the steering gears, but I taxi the ship out to the field and then handle it during the take off. His hands are following my movements. He is getting the feel of it. When we're up and leveled off at the height I'm going to fly, I handle it for a few minutes, letting

then, he is ready for a solo flight, for before this he has acquired the knack of the take-off.

Time Varies There is no fixed rule as to how many lessons it will take for him to reach this stage. Some get it in two hours flying others may require five hours, but that is the maximum, says Maheux. After that the candidate flies solo all the time until he has attained the number of hours required for the kind of a license he is seeking.

That's a bit misleading, for it indicates that from that point all he does for a lesson is to go to the port, take a plane and take off, handle it for a few minutes, letting

Continued on Page Four-A, Col. 2

LEWISTON JOURNAL MAGAZINE SECTION

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 1943

Continued from Page 1-A

flying as long as he wishes or sufficient to get credit for a certain amount of time in the air, which isn't quite the idea.

The instructor goes with him for the first 15 minutes each time he takes off. He flies the plane, but the other is there to see how he does it and then he is on his own, with the instructor on the ground keeping an eye on him.

Becomes a Pilot

After eight hours of solo flying he is eligible for a pilot's license. If he can pass the tests. Most of them can, but this is only a limited license. It authorizes him to fly a plane solo anywhere he wants to within the restrictions of war time needs; that is he can fly as much as he likes, but can take no person with him.

Before he can carry a passenger he must have had 35 hours in the air. This license is restricted also. His passenger can not be a paying one. It must be some person taken as a guest, there can be no pay. Before he can carry passengers for hire he must qualify as a commercial pilot and that calls for 80 hours in the air handling a plane and a test of the severest kind to be passed.

Even then the candidate isn't eligible to volunteer for CAP service if the call comes, as it is coming almost daily these times. Along with his instruction in handling the plane the candidate must have been

trained in military courtesy and discipline, must learn to send and receive the continental Morse telegraphic code by wireless, as well as radio communication, because in the service of CAP he will have to make use of all these.

This CAP squadron which Capt. Maheux is handling meets every Wednesday night at the Lewiston armory for instruction in these branches. They take their flying instructions at such hours of the day as are convenient for them in their other work. Most part it is from about 5 in the afternoon until sundown on the other days of the week and Sunday.

There are a few vacancies in the squadron at the present time, so that there is an opportunity for any interested to get in.

At the present time a number of those who received their training in this squadron are on active service flying every day. Some are patrolling the ocean on the watch for submarines and they have been responsible for the destruction of several of these threats to allied shipping.

Others are engaged in courier service, carrying messages and supplies for the army; yes, they are even flying men from one point to another as the war program requires, so, even though they have no machine guns, carry no bomb load, are flying planes of low power and small size, they're doing their bit toward winning the war, just as much as anyone else.



HANCOCK CRANKS PROPELLOR PRIOR to a student training flight from the Minot airport.

Figure 7.2. Continuation of the article

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON

School Graduation Certificate

This is to certify that DONALD NORMAN HANCOCK
(Name)
65 Whitney St., Auburn, Maine
(Address) was graduated from the
PRIMARY FLIGHT
curriculum of the
MAHEUX'S AIRPORT, INC.
(School)
R.F.D.#2, Mechanic Falls, Maine Air Agency Certificate No. 5154
(Address)
on JANUARY 6, 1947
(Date); that he has successfully completed the instruction required
by the Civil Air Regulations and is eligible to apply for a PRIVATE PILOT
Certificate and ----- Rating as issued by the Administrator of Civil Aeronautics.

The record of this graduate is as follows:


Flying time:	COURSES SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED	GRADE
Dual <u>17:05</u>	<u>C.A.R.</u>	<u>92%</u>
Solo <u>20:20</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>
Total <u>37:25</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>
Final flying grade <u>88%</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>

I certify that the above statements are true.

MAHEUX'S AIRPORT, INC.
(School)
By Roland R. Mahaux
(Signature)
Pres. & Treas.
(Title)

Date issued January 6, 1947

Figure 8. Flight school graduation certificate

 PRIVATE
MAINE AERONAUTICS COMMISSION
State Airport, Augusta

2180

AIRCRAFT PILOT'S REGISTRATION NO.

This certifies that Donald Norman Hancock
of 65 Whitney Street, Auburn, Maine

Age 20 Sex Male Height 5' 7½"

Weight 135 Color of Eyes Brown Color of Hair Brown
has complied with the provisions of the law governing the registration of
Aircraft Pilots.

THIS REGISTRATION EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 1947

Date issued March 27, 1947

Donald Norman Hancock
Signature of Licensee

J. E. Turkey
Director of Aeronautics

Figure 9. Maine pilot registration

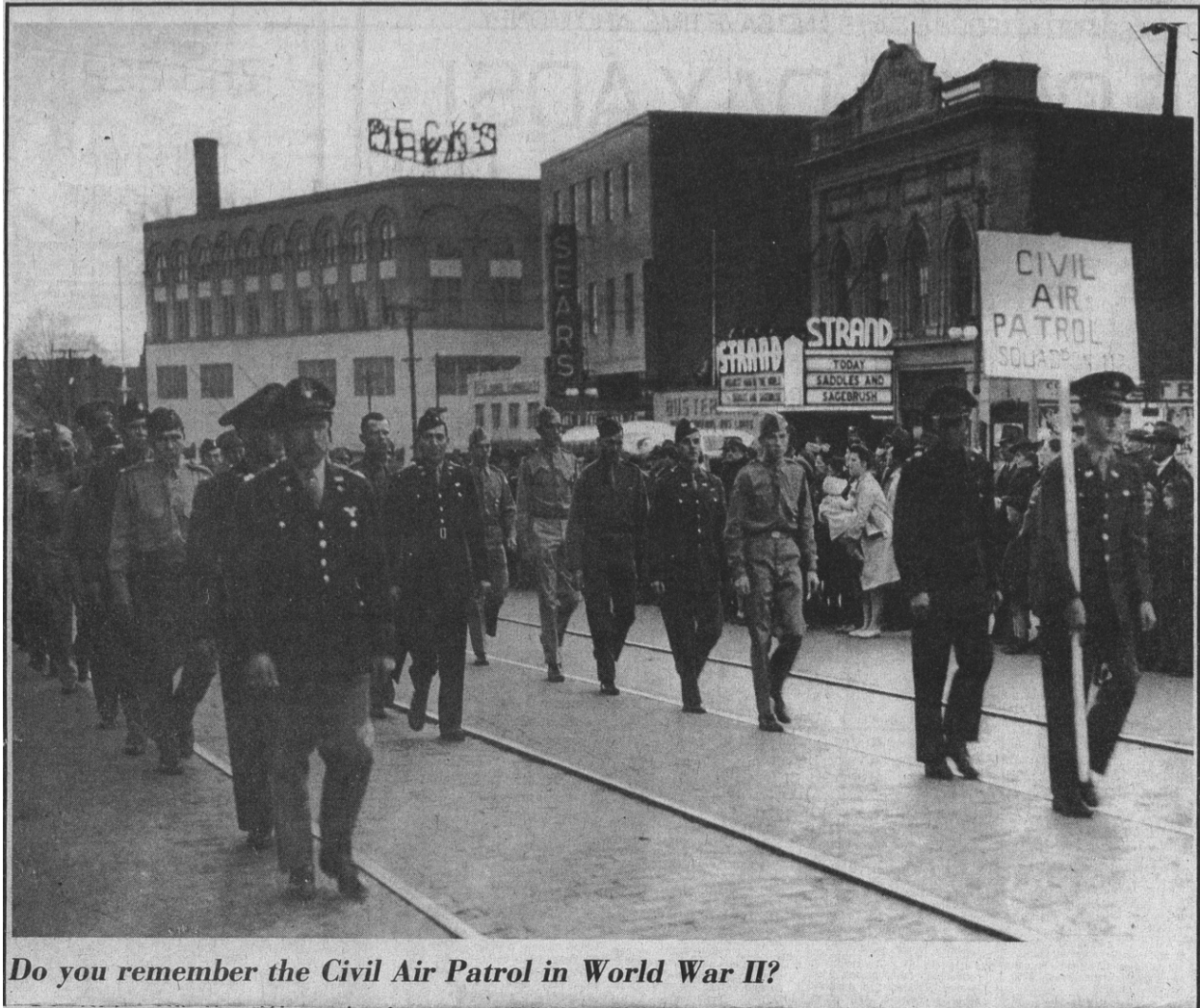


Figure 10. A reprint of the Figure 7 in the local newspaper

Civil Air Patrol to present awards during banquet

LEWISTON — The Maine Wing Civil Air Patrol will hold its annual Wing Conference and Awards Banquet on Saturday, April 2, at the Green Ladle.

The Civil Air Patrol traces its founding back to early 1941. One week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a group of more than 150,000 citizens from Maine to Mexico who were concerned about the defense of America's coastline joined forces under the jurisdiction of the Army Air Corps.

Many of the pilots flew more than 500,000 hours, were credited with sinking two enemy submarines and rescued hundreds of crash victims during World War II. Significant wartime missions in Maine were coastal submarine patrols, one at Portland Base 19 and the other at Base 20 in Trenton/Bar Harbor.

During the 18 months of their service, the coastal planes spotted many German subs, summoned help for ships in distress and flew special convoy missions. CAP lost pilots and observers during that time.

A former member of Coastal

Patrol Base 19 will be awarded a plaque from National Civil Air Patrol Headquarters during the conference. Former pilot, Lt. Walter M. Soule of Scarborough will be honored and will also be the banquet speaker.

Donald Hancock, who served at Base 112, Auburn/Lewiston and Minot, will be present. The late Capt. Merritt Roakes of Auburn served as the engineering officer for the 19th Coastal Base in Portland. His son, Robert, will represent him.

The late Lt. William Lacourse of Lewiston was a pilot at the 19th Coastal Patrol Base and his niece, Jeanne Lacourse, will represent her uncle. Capt. Roland Maheu, pilot and flight instructor for Base 112, will be represented by his daughter, Connie Armstrong. The recently deceased Col. Prentiss Godfrey will be represented by his son, Maj. Don Godfrey.

A special tribute is planned for all members, past and present, who attend the celebration. Gov. Paul LePage has proclaimed April 24 to 30 as Civil Air Patrol Week.

Figure 11. An article about Donald Hancock's promotion to Colonel at the 2011 Maine Wing Conference



Figure 12. Donald Hancock (left) is honored for his service in CAP during the Second World War and was promoted to Colonel

Appendix II: Access Agreement

CAP ACCESS AGREEMENT

KNOW BY ALL MEN/WOMEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That I, Donald W. Hancock have this day participated in an oral-digitally recorded interview with Joshua Bell covering my best recollections of events and experiences which may be of historical significance to the Civil Air Patrol.

I understand that the recordings and the transcribed manuscript resulting there from will be accessioned into the Civil Air Patrol's Historical Holdings. In the best interest of the Civil Air Patrol, I do hereby voluntarily give, transfer, convey, and assign all right, title, and interest in the memoirs and remembrances contained in the aforementioned magnetic tapes and manuscript to the Civil Air Patrol, to have and to hold the same forever, hereby relinquishing for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, and assigns all ownership, right, title, and interest therein to the donee expressly on the condition of strict observance of the following restrictions (if none, please write "None" below):

NONE

DONOR X Donald W. Hancock

DATED X July 3, 2014

ACCEPTED ON BEHALF OF THE CIVIL AIR PATROL BY Josh Bell

DATED 7/7/14